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IN THE CLAIMS:

1.-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A data stream transmission and reception method comprising:

receiving, in accordance with a reception contract, by plural receivers that have individual ID numbers and belong to a common group, a data stream transmitted from a transmitting end, wherein the plural receivers have a common group ID number;

managing the reception contract in accordance with of the individual ID numbers or the group ID number; and

charging the plural receivers in the common group indicated by the group ID number a billing amount charged for one receiver even if a portion of a data stream is individually received from the transmitting end by plural receivers in the common ~~group~~.group; and

selectively applying either a billing amount charged for one receiver or a billing amount for said common group.

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21. (Previously Presented) The data stream transmission and reception method of claim 20, wherein the plural receivers belonging to the common group are charged the billing amount charged for one of the plural receivers indicated by the group ID number regardless of the number of the receivers that receive the portion of a data stream.

22. (Previously Presented) The data stream transmission and reception method of claim 20, wherein each receiver receives a descriptor that indicates that either receiver-unit accounting or group-unit accounting is to be applied to the portion of a data stream, and when the reception contract is based on the group-unit accounting, the plural receivers can receive the portion of a data stream at the charge for one receiver, and when the reception contract is based on the receiver-unit accounting, each of the plural receivers that is indicated by the individual ID number can receive the portion of a data stream at the billing amount for one receiver.

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23. (Currently Amended) A data stream transmission and reception method comprising:

receiving, in accordance with a reception contract, by plural receivers that have individual ID numbers and belong to a common group, a data stream transmitted from a transmitting end, wherein the plural receivers have a common group ID number;

notifying the transmitting end of the individual ID number stored in a first receiver among plural receivers belonging to the common group;

notifying the transmitting end of the individual ID number of at least one additional receiver that belongs to the common group of the first receiver, and information indicating that the additional receiver and the first receiver belong to the common group;

assigning, by the transmitting end that has received the notification, the common group ID number to the first receiver and the additional receiver, wherein plural receivers belonging to the common group are charged a billing amount charged for one receiver even if a portion of a data stream is individually

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received from the transmitting end with plural receivers in the common ~~group~~-group; and

selectively applying either a billing amount charged for one receiver or a billing amount for said common group.

24. (Previously Presented) The data stream transmission and reception method of claim 23, wherein said assigning further comprises outputting a descriptor that indicates that either receiver-unit accounting or group-unit accounting is to be applied to the portion of a data stream, and

when the reception contract is based on the group-unit accounting, the plural receivers can receive the portion of a data stream at a billing amount charged for one receiver, and when the reception contract is based on the receiver-unit accounting, each of the plural receivers can receive the portion of a data stream at the billing amount charged for one receiver.

25. (Previously Presented) The data stream transmission and reception method as described in claim 20 or 23, wherein the reception contract is updated at regular time intervals.

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26. (Previously Presented) The data stream transmission and reception method of claim 20 or 23, wherein said receiving comprises receiving a data stream comprising video, audio, and data which are transmitted by a digital broadcasting station; and the reception contract is for applying a predetermined accounting method to the portion of a data stream that is received for a predetermined period of time.

27. (Previously Presented) The data stream transmission and reception method of claim 20 or 23, wherein content of the reception contract is multiplexed in a data stream to be transmitted to the receiver.

28. (Previously Presented) The receiving apparatus of claim 20 or 23, wherein the portion of a data stream comprises one of an event program and channel data.

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29. (Previously Presented) The receiving apparatus of claim 22 or 24, wherein the descriptor is in an event information table of service information in a data stream.

30.-33. (Cancelled)